

Call for Abstracts: Mobility, Time & Political Possibility

Deconstructed diasporic workshop

Convened by:

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Mobility, Time and Political Possibilities is a year-long virtual writing workshop running from early 2021 and culminating in an in-person even in early 2022. We envisage a small, but committed group of scholars meeting monthly, *in camera*, to share and critically engage each other's work-in-progress, on a rotating basis. Our aim is to produce a provocative interdisciplinary edited volume or special issue, via a collaborative and iterative process.

The regulation of human mobility via the use of time has attracted much recent scholarly attention. Much of this work is concerned with waiting, stoppage, deferral and delay as disciplinary techniques or by-product. Rarely is time and its manipulation framed as a form of elusion or liberation. Less often still, is the time at stake in these techniques, *itself* submitted to critical inquiry. Does waiting, for example, imply an interruption, and sometimes a form of injustice, only because of assumptions about the progressive direction in which time is expected to flow? Distinguishing specific measures of time from the notion of temporalities – that is, ways of knowing and ordering time - opens up a larger set of questions about space-time parameters according to which mobilities are governed, and futures are imagined and desired. How might processual, quantum, Indigenous or other ways of conceptualizing time be brought to bear on thinking about mobility and its horizons?

Our intention is not to produce an almanac of the miserable: a series of studies into forms of waiting or frustrated futures manifested across the globe. Rather, it is to consider how temporal forms of exclusion, alienation, marginalisation and manipulation underlie governance –broadly conceived – and open possibilities for transforming political futures.

On one hand, we are interested in the imbrication of time and temporality with mechanisms for racialisation, spatialization, expropriation, displacement and extraction. This includes attending to how states deploy time (and its miscounting) to police national boundaries by developing legal manoeuvres that separate the chronological advancement of the clock from the counting of time under the mantle of the law. By pegging rights to specific legal statuses, and counting the time of different statuses differently, states can suspend, slow down, or speed up chronological time in

order to exclude, delay, or (conversely) hasten the inclusion of particular non-citizen residents. The politically strategic use of time is not only about control of mobility per se, but also about naming, categorizing, and emplacing in temporal terms (as advanced or backwards, primitive, or modern for example). On the other hand, we want to consider how time and temporality intersect with resistance, critique and the cultivation of alternative political formations, including modes of hospitality and welcome, political community, and justice.

How do plural temporalities provide new reference points from which to examine the forms of power at stake in questions of mobility and from which to signal other kinds of mobile aspirations beyond integration into progressive/developmental futures. If time is a discipline, what forms of ill-discipline do multi-temporalities create? How might they operate as forms of intentional or de facto resistance, deploying, what Lefebvre calls polyrhythmicity that makes governing more difficult? Or that generates what Deleuze and Guattari label 'nomadic power'? How do varied spatio-temporal conceptions of the political present open or curtail the possibility of collective mobilization? What subjects emerge at these points of intersection and disjuncture? What kinds of maps might be drawn to capture the intersection of space, time and mobility imagined and experienced in other ways? What visual and aesthetic vocabularies might be deployed for the same purpose? What histories might inform this openness to temporalities in play? What methodologies are needed to investigate them? Where, when and how do we focus our inquiries?

The goal is a collection that is both conceptually and methodologically provocative: outlining new themes, approaches, and considerations for the socio-spatial and political study of human mobility.

Those interested in participating are requested to submit a 500-750 word abstract by 19 October 2020. A committee will assess the abstracts and provide potential participants additional details in early November 2020. As an interdisciplinary workshop, we welcome participants from across the social sciences working from all methodological and theoretical perspectives. We particularly encourage submissions from emerging scholars and people working in and on sites outside Europe and North America.

All abstracts and queries should be sent to temporality@migration.org.za

